

Message Text

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51

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 IO-14 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DPW-01 DRC-01 /126 W

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R 091001Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5296

AMCONSUL CAN THO

CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 3529

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, CB, VS

SUBJECT: KHMER KROM AND REFUGEE TROOPS FOR PHNOM PENH

REF: PHNOM PENH 2641

1. SPECIAL FORCES COMMANDER COLONEL THACH RENG TOLD US MARCH 9 THAT ON THE BASIS OF HIS VISIT TO SOUTH VIET NAM HE IS CERTAIN AT LEAST 500 KHMER BACHELORS NOW REFUGEES IN VIETNAM'S CHAU DOC AND KIEN GIANG PROVINCES ARE WILLING TO JOIN FANK IN PHNOM PENH IMMEDIATELY. AN ADDITIONAL 2,000-3,000 FAMILY MEN WILL COME IF GUARANTEED THAT THEIR FAMILIES MAY JOIN THEM AFTER THEY PASS THROUGH TRAINING CENTERS. MOST OF THESE MEN WOULD PREFER TO FIGHT AROUND TAKEO OR KAMPOT TO BE NEAR THEIR LANDS, BUT ARE WILLING TO FIGHT ANYWHERE THEY ARE ASSIGNED.

2. THE KHMER KROM (KK) RECRUITING PROBLEM IS COMPLICATED BY POLITICAL RIVALRY BETWEEN THE TWO MAJOR KK FACTIONS AND RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF REGIONAL COMMANDERS TO LET HARD-FIGHTING KK TROOPS LEAVE VIETNAM. PRESIDENT THIEU, ACCORDING TO KHMER AMBASSADOR POK SAN AN, FAVORS RELEASE OF THE KK BUT REGIONAL COMMANDERS WOULD RATHER HAVE THE KK FOR THEIR OWN UNITS. THACH RENG SAID THAT
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BOTH KK FACTIONS ULTIMATELY FAVOR DISPATCH OF TROOPS TO DEFEND

CAMBODIA. KHMER EMBASSY OFFICIALS ANALYZED THAT RECENT ARVN PERSONNEL MOVES HAVE RELEASED UP TO 20,000 KHMER KROM (MANY OVERAGE) FROM THE ARMY. MOST HAVE NO LAND AND MAY BE WILLING TO FIGHT IN THE KHMER REPUBLIC.

3. THACH RENG SAID HE SENT A REPORT OF HIS FINDING TO PRESIDENT LON NOL MARCH 8 IN WHICH HE NOTED TWO MAJOR PROBLEMS: A) GVN PERMISSION WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR THE RELEASE OF KK RECRUITS AND B) THE GKR LACKS TRANSPORT TO BRING OVER REFUGEES WHOSE DEPARTURE FROM VIETNAM HE NOTED IS NOT IN QUESTION. HE WILL AWAIT LON NOL'S INSTRUCTION BEFORE TAKING ACTION BUT HINTED BROADLY THAT A REQUEST FOR US TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE WILL BE FORTHCOMING.

4. COMMENT: WE LET THACH RENG'S HINT PASS AND BELIEVE KAF HAS THE ASSETS TO TRANSPORT ANY RECRUITS WHO MATERIALIZE.
ENDERS

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